(b) The CBI has filed charge-sheets against 460 officials in the court of law.

National Highways in Bihar

†*436. SHRI LALU PRASAD:

SHRI VIJAY SINGH YADAV:

Will the Minister of ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State of Bihar has sent a proposal for improving the condition of 1200 kms. of roads out of the new roads declared recently as National Highways;

(b) if so, the action taken by the Ministry to upgrade the same; and

(c) by when this work would be completed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS [MAJ. GEN. (RETD.) B.C. KHANDURI]: (a) Proposals for improvement of 1,064 km of new roads declared recently as National Highways have been received.

(b) and (c) Ordinarily, under National Highways (Original) works, proposals for an amount equal to two and half times the allocation are sanctioned, including the balance cost of works in progress. With an allocation of Rs. 52.00 crore for Bihar, the ceiling limit of sanctions is Rs. 130.00 crore during the current year. At present, the value of sanctioned works is Rs. 169.15 crore.

28 Nos. of works have been sanctioned for improvement of 247.58 km length, including bridges on newly declared National Highways for a total estimated cost of Rs. 57.41 crore. The works are targeted to be completed by March, 2004.

Arrears of sugarcane growers

†*437. SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 64 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 18th July, 2002 and state:

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†Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

(a) by when the arrears of farmers would be paid to them by sugar mills of Uttar Pradesh;

(b) the names of the sugar mills which are yet to pay more than 25 per cent of arrears alongwith the names of the mills which have been issued with show cause notice;

(c) whether Government would take special measures to ensure payment of arrears to the farmers, keeping in view the existing drought situation; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV): (a) to (d) The responsibility of ensuring timely payment of cane price dues to the sugarcane growers lies with the respective State Governments. As per the information received from the Government of Uttar Pradesh, as on 20.11.2002, the total cane price dues payable by the sugar mills of the State of Uttar Pradesh for the cane purchased during the crushing season 2001-2002, were Rs. 5093.77 crores against which the amount paid is Rs. 4701.73 crores, leaving a balance of Rs. 392.04 crores, which is 7.70% of the total cane price dues.

2. There are 8 sugar mills of the U.P. State Sugar Corporation Ltd. which are yet to pay more than 25 per cent of their cane price payable. The mills are, Ramkola, Baitalpur, Shahganj, Lakshmiganj, Jarwal Road, Chhata, Deoria, and Pipraich. Besides, there are two such private sector sugar mills *viz.* M/s Indo-Gulf Industries Ltd. (Maizapur) and M/s Venus Sugar Ltd. (Manjhawali). The Government of U.P. has issued the recovery certificate in respect of the Maizapur sugar mill. A show cause notice has also been issued to the Manjhawali sugar mill.

3. To liquidate the cane price arrears, the Government of U.P. has extended a loan of Rs. 130 crores to the mills of the U.P. State Sugar Corporation Ltd. and the cooperative sugar mills in the State. The State Government is also advising the private sector sugar mills to pay their cane price arrears and has issued the recovery certificates and show cause notices to the sugar mills having high cane price arrears.

4. The Central Government have recently decided to create a buffer stock of 20 lakh tonnes of sugar for a period of one year to enable the

sugar factories to receive a subsidy amount of Rs. 412 crores from the Sugar Development Fund. In addition, about Rs. 374 crores would be available from the Banks to the mills on account of buffer stock. Thus, a total amount of Rs. 786 crores would be provided to the mills to facilitate the payment of dues to the sugarcane growers.

Rice procurement in Assam

*438. DR. ARUN KUMAR SARMA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the support price fixed for procurement of rice and other commodities during the last three years, up-to November, 2002, indicating the agency entrusted for such purchase, State-wise;

(b) the reasons for which FCI was not entrusted to make the direct procurement in Assam as done in some other States;

(c) whether Government propose to make rice procurement in Assam only through FCI in the current financial year; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD YADAV):(a) The Minimum Support Prices fixed by the Government for major agricultural commodities are unifrom throughout the country and are not fixed State-wise. The Minimum Support Prices of wheat, paddy and coarse grains for the last three years are as under:-

(Rs. Per qtl.)

Marketing Season	Wheat	Paddy		Coarse grains (Maize/Jowar/ Bajra/Ragi)
		Common	Grade "A"	
2000-01	580	510	540	445
2001-02	610	530	560	485
2002-03	620	530*	560*	485*

* In addition to MSP, the Government has approved the payment of special drought relief prices of Rs. 20/-per qtl. for paddy and Rs. 10/-per qtl. for Bajra and Rs. 5/- quintal for Jowar/Maize/Ragi during KMS 2002-03.